GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2462
ANSWERED ON:11.03.2016
Mitigation of Problems in ICDS
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Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that ICDS scheme is plagued by lack of quality food, uneven distribution and siphoning of food and leakages and grant of contracts to private contractors to supply supplementary nutrition despite Supreme Court orders;
(b) if so, the details thereof along with the corrective steps taken in this regard;
(c) whether a Committee of Secretaries has been set up under the ICDS scheme to monitor and ensure proper supply of nutritional food products under the ICDS, if so, the details thereof; and
(d) whether Government has fixed any target to ensure complete coverage, if so, the details thereof and steps taken to achieve the target?

Answer

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI MANEKA SANJAY GANDHI)

(a) & (b) The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented by the States/UTs. The Scheme provides for a package of six services including Supplementary Nutrition (SNP) for children in the age group of 0-6 years and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Government of India has issued guidelines on 24.2.2009 prescribing the revised nutritional and calorific standards in the food served at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs). These guidelines were endorsed by the Apex Court on 22.04.2009. All the States/UTs are mandated to observe these guidelines and ensure quality standard of Supplementary Nutrition Programme. Guidelines were also issued on 9.5.2012, 26.9.2014 and 23.6.2015 in this regard. The Government of India has been receiving complaints about quality of food and leakages. Since the scheme is implemented by the States/UTs, these complaints are forwarded to them for taking remedial action. Reports are also sought in cases of serious nature. In the review meetings, the States/UTs are requested to improve all services under ICDS Scheme including Supplementary Nutrition Programme.

The Supreme Court vide their order dated 07.10.2004, in a Public Interest Litigation − W.P. No.196 of 2001, had directed that the contractors shall not be used for supply of nutrition in Anganwadis and preferably ICDS funds shall be spent by making use of village communities, Self-Help Groups and Mahila Mandals for buying of grains and preparation of meals. All the States/UTs were advised on 17.12.2004 to comply with the Supreme Court order dated 7.10.2004.

Later on, in Civil Appeal No.7104 of 2011 − Shagun Mahila Udyogik Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit versus State of Maharashtra & Others the Supreme Court gave judgement dated 19th August, 2011 in which the Court has inter-alia stressed on maintaining the quality of food. All the States/UTs were requested on 9th May, 2012 to comply with the directions of the Supreme Court in the aforesaid judgement.

(c) Government of India has introduced a Five Tier Monitoring and Review Mechanism at different levels (National/State/District/Block and Anganwadi level). The Committee at the National level is headed by Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development with Secretaries of line Ministries, heads of NIN and NIPCCD as members. These Committees are mandated to monitor the implementation of the scheme.

(d) The ICDS Scheme was universalised in 2008-09 in which opening of 14 lakh AWCs and 7076 projects in the country were approved. As on date, all the 14 lakh AWCs have been sanctioned and 13.49 lakh AWCs and 7072 projects are operational covering the entire country.

Continuous efforts are being made to operationalize the remaining AWCs for which States are addressed from time to time.

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